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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#)

SUBJECT: THE PUP DIVIDE: UPDATE ON THE OLD GUARD'S ANTICS

REF: (A) Belmopan 172, (B) Belmopan 187, (C) Belmopan 503

¶1. The People's United Party (PUP) has remained relatively quiet following its staggering defeat in the February general elections (ref A). Recently though, internecine struggles have resurfaced as former PMs Said Musa and George Price (sometimes referred to as the father of the nation) lent their support to a convention that backed Florencio Marin, Jr., for standard bearer in the northern district of Corozal. The convention was held in open defiance of John Briceno, party leader, and his executive team. Despite warnings from the party leader that any convention held without executive committee concurrence would not be officially recognized, Florencio Marin, Jr., who is supported by most of the old PUP guard, went ahead with the convention and won the nomination unchallenged. In addition to aggravating the strained relations between Briceno and Musa's cronies, the support from the old guard was seen as an attempt to regain control of the party and garner support for Musa who was formally charged with theft in court on December 4 (ref B and C).

¶2. Briceno issued a statement that the executive committee considers the convention results null and void and informed the public that when the party decides on dates for national conventions, the northern district of Corozal must hold another convention for election of standard bearer.

¶3. Briceno moved quickly to penalize the old guard. The national executive committee sent letters of reprimand to Francis Fonseca and Florencio Marin, Jr., expelled the Chairman of the Corozal Southeast constituency, and suspended all of the members of the branch committee, including Florencio Marin, Sr., former Minister of Natural Resources.

¶4. Comment: The political infighting occurring in the PUP proves again that the old guard is just not ready to depart from the scene. Their commitment to making it difficult if not impossible for the new party leader to reunite and refocus the party is unyielding. Their actions indicate the old guard is willing to lose seats in the upcoming municipal elections by dividing the party and sandbagging the newly elected party leadership in an effort to reclaim power in the longer term. This does not bode well for the PUP's performance in the March municipal elections and suggests we may see the old players muddying the waters for some time to come. End Comment.

DIFFILY